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ABSTRACT

A method of authenticating anonymous users while reducing potential for "middleman" fraud includes the step of constructing a puzzle in response to
5 information received from a software user. The puzzle includes the received information. The puzzle is sent to the user by a software provider. The user solves the puzzle and returns the solution to the provider. The puzzle includes a portion of a value derived from an encrypted "cookie" and an exponentiation of the derived value. The cookie includes information about the user.